
News Release

U.S. Department of the Interior
U.S. Geological Survey

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Elvis Sighted at USGS Science Camp

He ain't nothin' but a Corn Snake, but Elvis was the reptile star of "Amazing Animals," a wildlife presentation given by Emberly Hudak, Reston Association naturalist at the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Science Camp 1999. In partnership with the Reston Association, the USGS has developed a highly successful science camp where children can interact with USGS scientists, participate in science lab experiments and computer lab activities, and enjoy field trips. Four 2-week sessions are offered for children ages 8-12.

During the second 2-week EcoCamp session, Laurel Bybell, USGS paleontologist, intrigued the campers with "Fascinating Fossils." Through an interactive hands-on discussion, the campers learned how fossils are formed and viewed materials, such as deer antlers, ferns, and seashells, before and after they became fossilized.

Two field trips highlighted the ecology theme session. Environmental Education Coordinators with the National Wildlife Visitor Center at the Patuxent Research Refuge in Laurel, Md., educated the campers on the diverse nature of forest, wetland, and meadow habitats. Hands-on activities in the Visitor Center helped the children learn about the importance of animals and their habitats, the food chain, and wildlife management. The younger campers enjoyed a trip to Frying Pan Park where Kidwell Farm recreates early farm life in Fairfax County. They were thrilled to see all the animal babies born this spring, including Austin, the Hereford bull calf, Pongo and Purdy, the dalmatian spotted lambs, and all the Yorkshire and Hampshire piglets.

Other educational activities during the EcoCamp session included an erosion experiment in the science lab and looking at Internet Web sites that focus on ecology and the biosphere. The children also went boating on Lake Anne in Reston, played soccer, participated in drama skits, and worked on the science camp newsletter.

Future USGS Science Camp 1999 sessions include Hydrofantastic and Diagnosis Fun. For more information on the Reston Association Science Camps, please contact the Reston Association Registrar's office at 435-6551.

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As the nation's largest water, earth and biological science and civilian mapping agency, the USGS works in cooperation with more than 2,000 organizations across the country to provide reliable, impartial scientific information to resource managers, planners, and other customers. This information is gathered in every state by USGS scientists to minimize the loss of life and property from natural disasters, contribute to sound economic and physical development of the nation's natural resources, and enhance the quality of life by monitoring water, biological, energy, and mineral resources.

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(Note to Reporters/Editors: If interested in obtaining digital photographs of the activities mentioned in this news release, please contact Cheryl O'Brien at 703-648-5929 with your e-mail address.)